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AUTHOR Fishman, Walda Katz
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ABSTRACT

A personal evaluation is expressed on the changing role of women in the United States as a result of current social attitudes and of recent legislation regarding medical, economic, and educational matters. It is hypothesized that the United States is currently experiencing an extreme and growing right-wing political movement whose targets include women, workers, ethnic and religious minorities, and homosexuals. Right wing movements are interpreted as embodying a political philosophy (elitist versus democratic) and an organizational structure (corporate class encouragement of activities to maintain a position of power and privilege). Organizations associated with right-wing attitudes include the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce, and the National Right to Work Committee. Recent instances in which these right wing attitudes have worked against rights of women and other ethnic minorities include the Bakke decision on affirmative action enforcement, anti abortion and anti ERA efforts, occupational health and safety regulations which discriminate against pregnant women, increased funding for right-wing groups, reduced funding for contraceptive research, and increased religious and moralist propaganda aimed at keeping women in the home. The conclusion is that women must organize with workers, ethnic minorities, and other oppressed groups to form a united front for equality against anti-democratic right-wing forces. (Author/DB)

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THE RIGHT-WING ATTACK ON WOMEN

by

Walda Katz Fishman
Howard University

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We are currently experiencing an extreme right-wing movement of large and growing proportions in this country and throughout the world. The radical right, sometimes referred to as the "new right" (though it's not really new), is a highly orchestrated and well-financed force. Today's targets of the right include women, workers, Blacks, Hispanics, Jews, other ethnic minorities, homosexuals, progressive educators, etc.

This paper focuses on the right-wing attack on women. Women are facing severe and systematic reverses in the courts and legislatures. They are being denied equality under the law, educational and job equality, and the right to control their own bodies. Various manifestations of the right's attack on women include the anti-abortion and anti-ERA efforts, Occupational Health and Safety (OSHA) regulations which discriminate against fertile and pregnant women, the impact of the Bakke dicision (and pending Weber decision) on affirmative action enforcement, Taft-Hartley 14B (right-to-work laws), and the adverse effect on women of the Carter anti-inflation guidelines, CETA cutbacks and the entire economic package.

We are concerned primarily with the anti-abortion (right-to-life) and anti-ERA efforts, which represent the most visible, emotional and controversial of these attacks.

The concerted right-wing movement to keep women an oppressed group is best understood as an important component of the general anti-democratic tendencies in America today. Social, economic and political crises which have historically given rise to intense right-wing activity are, we believe, present here and now. A conceptual and theoretical understanding of the right-wing is presented as a framework for the examination of the right-wing attacks on women.

Right wing movements embody a political philosophy and an organizational structure. The essential nature of the right wing in both these aspects and in action is its class character (Ewen, 1979). The subjective understanding of individual right wingers and right wing groups may be, and usually is, in terms of the moralistic and emotional explanation of the issues presented to them by the right wing leadership. Nevertheless, the historical function of the right wing has always been to divide the working class against itself. We have witnessed right wing activity pitting men against women, white against black and other ethnic minorities, gentile against Jew, patriots against "communists" and "traitors," nonunion workers against union workers and, in the case of the ERA and abortion, women against women. This strategy of division insures that

attention will be diverted from the genuine issues of social and economic equality and quality of life and guarantees that movement toward these goals will be obstructed.

Right wing movements must also be understood as a response of certain elements of the corporate class to maintain their position of power and privilege when confronted with objective economic crises and movements for equality and change by working people (Ewen, 1979). When it becomes clear that economic conditions cannot support both high levels of corporate profit and a decent standard of living for working people, the anti-democratic forces of the right wing increase their activity to protect profits over the social, political and economic rights of the people. The right wing finds it necessary to attack the rights of individuals guaranteed under the Bill of Rights, the National Labor Relations Act and a variety of social programs developed to insure the economic security and political participation of the masses of Americans. The assault on the rights of women, Blacks and other ethnic minorities and workers is all too obvious.

To be sure, not all elements of the corporate elite may agree on the "best" strategy for protecting their class

interests. The more progressive sectors of this class gave us the welfare state of the New Deal, the great society and the new frontier. (The condition of the welfare state under the "new foundation" of the Carter administration is questionable.) Today the right wing solution for America is being promoted by the most reactionary and chauvinistic corporate interests - those represented by the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce and their political arm, the National Right to Work Committee. As even the most cursory research on the right wing assault on women indicates, it is the same folks and for essentially the same reasons who gave us "right to work" that have now given us "right to life."

We should not, however underestimate the impact of the continuing and deepening economic crisis on convincing more and more of the corporate elite that the right wing solution is the only one. There is evidence that the top elite in this country, as well as internationally, may see the need for dismantling democracy. Members of the Trilateral Commission - a superelite think tank spearheaded in the early 1970s by David Rockefeller and consisting of corporate and financial elites, intellectuals and politicians from the United States, Japan, West German and other western

European countries - warned in 1975 that with the impending economic crisis, world democracy was becoming increasingly dysfunctional (Trilateral Commission, 1975). Two years ago Carter warned that if we do not solve our energy problem, this may mean the end of American democratic institutions (Washington Post, 1977).

The leadership of the right wing has a clear analysis of what they are doing and why. But they cannot overtly admit their anti-democratic agenda because the mass of Americans are for democracy. (Even Hitler sold his progrpm to the German people by calling it "socialist".) The right wing effort can only succeed, however, if it has a base of popular support. So, the leadership sells its program by creating simplistic analyses for complex problems. People have real questions and honest concerns. They want to know why their economic well-being is being threatened and why the traditional way of life is being disrupted. By pandering to peoples' fears and emotions, the right wing provides the easy solution - the scapegoat, identified as the "enemy of the people" (e.g., the international Jewish conspiracy, the Negro Tide, the communist tradeunions, the "unfeminine and anti-family" women who want the right to choose abortion and equal rights, homo-

sexuals, welfare "cheaters," etc.). The right wing promises that if these groups are just taken care of, then all will be well and things will return to the way they were in the "good old days" of church, motherhood, applepie and patriotism.

Because the concerns of the people are real, the right wing is able, especially in times of deepening crisis, to convince a large segment of the population that it has the correct solution to society's ills. These people come to see their interests as coinciding with the interests of the right wing. Thus, many women have become convinced that the availablility of abortion and the push for the ERA are contributing to the sexual revolution and the breakdown of traditional morality in society. Some white males believe that the right wing solution - the fight against affirmative action and ERA and other efforts to provide equality for women and ethnic minorities - is the only way for then to maintain their privileged position.

The right wing has set itself up as the keeper of all things righteous and good. Those who oppose its positions are automatically suspect, evil and bad. In the absence of alternative and more correct explanations of the issues themselves the program of the right wing, has gain substantial popular support. It is

essential to expose the moralistic propaganda and anti-democratic agenda of the right for what it is so that the movement for social, political and economic rights of women, workers, and ethnic minorities can proceed.

Out of this theoretical understanding of the right wing come the tools for comprehending the right wing attack on women. Nowhere is the divisive, diversionary and emotional character of the right wing more evident than in its assualt on the rights of women. A review of the situation for women with regard to their right to choose abortion and prospects for passage of the ERA reveals the heavy hand and generous funding of the right.

THE ABORTION ISSUE:

In 1973 the United States Supreme Court ruled that women have a qualified right to abortion. A women in consultation with her doctor can choose abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy. Only after the first trimester does the state have the right to interfere to protect the woman and in the last trimester to protect the fetus.

Since then, this decision has been under attack. Today significant federal and state limitations on abortion exist.

- Military personnel and their dependents are denied medical coverage for abortion, with very limited exceptions.

- Peace Corps personnel cnanot receive Foreign Assistance Act funds for abortion or family counseling services.
- Legal cases involving abortion cannot be handled by legal services lawyers or by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.
- Perhaps the most serious and well known limitations on abortion stem from the Hyde Amendment which denies Medicaid funds for abortions for poor women except in the very limited circumstances of medical necessity and rape. This amendment has resulted in a reduction of 98% in abortions funded by Medicaid (National NOW Times, 1979:8).

You may recall that the Hyde Amendment was finally passed in December, 1977 after Congress was tied up for five months debating the issue and key representatives threatened to hold up the salaries and paychecks of HEW employees. According to Connie Mooney (1978) of NARAL we can expect to see similar riders on Department of Defense budget and other appropriation bills as tactics to gain Congressional limitations on abortion funding.

In - May, 1979 - the Supreme Court struck another blow to the poor women of America under the banner of the Hyde Amendment. This amendment cut off only federal funds for abortions and left open to individual states

the option of using state funds for abortions not federally financed. The ruling of the justices, in support of a 1977 decision, specifies that the states are no longer required to fund abortions except when they are "medically necessary." In essence, the Hyde amendment has been extended to cover both federal and state funds for abortion. The last hope for poor women that they are entitled to free abortions rests with the outcome of a case now pending in the federal court and expected to be decided within the year. This case tests the constitutionality of the Hyde amendment, i.e., whether the Constitution gives women the right to have free abortions (Washington Star, 1979:A1, A4).

Fallout from the abortion issue has been extensive. There has been a serious reduction in funds for contraceptive research, down from $82 million in 1977 to $63 million in 1977. The threat of anti-abortion amendments kept the Public Health Services Act funding tied-up in the 95th Congress. Abortion foes are pushing boycotts of United Fund campaigns in communities where clinics run by Planned Parenthood and similar groups participate. Abortion foes are also telling their members to "take-over" Health Systems Agencies which engage in long-term health care planning and approval of facilities and services (National NOW Times, 1979:9).

In 1976 anti-abortion groups turned to a strategy of violence - they disrupted services and conducted sit-ins, demonstrations and fire-bombings at clinics providing abortion services. They have also assualted clinic doctors, other personnel and patients. On January 6, 1978 a co-ordinated action against clinics throughout the country was carried. Clinics were hit in Omaha, New York City, Baltimore, Minneapolis and Anchorage. The week of Mother Day, 1978 saw clinics invaded in Washington,D.C., Chicago, Cincinnati and Cleveland. Arrests were made in these instances. However, attacks were carried out against clinics, personnel and patients in St. Paul, Iowa City, Omaha, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, Columbus, Cincinnati, Burlington, VT and Bridgeport, CN, with no arrests or appreshensions (National NOW Times, 1979:9).

Mooney (1978) reports that when the police department was called and told of a clinic demonstration and firebombing in Cleveland, the police officer receiving the account said "lady, if it were my day off, I'd be there too." There is reason to believe that the violent attacks of the anti-abortion forces are being conducted today with the complicity of the state, much as was the case with lynchings of Blacks and the firebombings of their homes and churches

in an earlier period.

Opponents of abortion have adopted two additional strategies of dramatic significance in their effort to deny women their rights. They have attempted to get Congress to pass a "Human Life Amendment" which, if then ratified by 38 states, would become part of the Constitution. Such an amendment would have the fetus treated as a person for constitutional and legal purposes. It would have devastating consequences for women wanting abortions and using certain birth control measures and for their doctors. Women having abortions and doctors performing them would be guilty of murder. Women using I.U.D.'s and birth control pills and doctors prescribing these forms of birth control would be guilty of murder. Women who miscarry would be guilty of murder if they were found to be responsible for the miscarriage in any way. Women carrying fetuses with devastating genetic disorders, e.g., Tay Sachs, Sickle Cell Anemia, etc., even when these diseases are detected early in the pregnancy would be forced to bear their babies or be guilty of murder. Friends or relatives who aid a woman in getting an abortion or provide funds would also be guilty of murder (National NOW Times, 1979:9).

Congressional representatives are political creatures

and have not supported the extremely controversial and anti-democratic "human life amendment." Perhaps they sensed what a 1977 poll of The New York Times and CBS News revealed - that 74% of those questioned agreed that "the right of a woman to have an abortion should be left entirely up to the woman and her doctor" (ACLU, 1978).

The right to lifers, frustrated but not to be outwitted, have come up with yet another tactic which holds the potential for playing even greater havoc with the democratic process and rights of Americans than the human life amendment. This is the call for a constitutional convention to outlaw abortion and possibly anything else the convention might decide to outlaw - including the Bill of Rights. Under Article V of the Constitution 2/3 of the states (34 states) by a simple majority vote of their legislatures may petition Congress to call a constitutional convention to propose constitutional amendments. More than 12 states have already done so.

The strategy of a call for a constitutional convention dramatically increases the strength of abortion foes. They need only a majority of the votes in 2/3 of the state legislatures, which some estimate they are close to having (McCormack, 1977). If a convention should be called, each

state has one vote. According to the ACLU (1978): "The opponents of the right to choose... are counting on a combination of small states and slim majorities to make their minority position against abortion the law of the land. Less domocracy is their watchword."

The possible effects of a constitutional convention are unfathomable. No established procedures for calling such a convention and conducting its business exist. In 1787 the first and only constitutional convention was held. Originally it was mandated with revising the Articles of Confederation. But once convened, the convention abolished the Articles and drafted what we now know as the U.S. Constitution. The inclusion of a provision for calling a constitutional convention was included as a safeguard for the states against the concentration of power in Congress.

The drafters of our Constitution in 1787 did not, however, draw up any guidelines for the selection of representatives to any furture constitutional conventions, for limiting the substantive issues which would be the business for the convention, for specifying procedural rules, or for indicating the role of Congress. Many years later, in 1967, Sam Ervin (then senator from North Carolina) sponsored a bill

establishing procedural guidelines for a constitutional convention. Though this bill passed the Senate during the 92nd Congress, it died in the House during the 93rd (NARAL Project for the Constitution, 1978).

Thus, once convened, a constitutional convention of today might resemble the constitutional convention of 1787 and become a "runaway" convention. It might decide to throw out the current Constitution and Bill of Rights and draft a new one. The decisions of the Supreme Court which legalize abortion rest on the First, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution and on the "penumbra of the Bill of Rights" which guarantees to the individual privacy in personal, family, marital and sexual matters (National NOW Times, 1979:9). There is good reason to believe that these working for a constitutional convention to deny reproductive freedom to women would also be working to eliminate or change these Constitutional protections.

Lawrence Tribe, a Constitutional specialist and Harvard Law Professor, testified before the Judiciary Committee of the Massachusettes Legislature that "If a convention is called, its potential for radical change will be hard to confine; there are numerous opinions about what such a

convention could or could not do, but there are no precedents, and there can be no confident answers" (NARAL Project for the Constitution, 1978). Even anti-abortion groups such as the John Birch Society are fearful of a constitutional convention to resolve the issue. John McManus writes in "The Birch Log": "We believe that a Constitutional Convention would be a pandora's Box that honest foes of abortion would wish had never been open" (ACLU, 1978).

Abortion is clearly a volatile issue which has polarized the country and its women. The opponents of abortion, in the name of family, God and country, have attempted to impose their minority view on the majority of American women. Right to lifers have resorted to physical violence against women simply exercising their right to choose abortion and against the doctors and other personnel providing these services. Through the Hyde amendment and its extension to the states they have denied to poor women their constitutional right to have abortions covered by mediciad or state funds. With their call for a constitutional convention they are threatening to undermine and destroy the foundation for democracy in America.

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT:

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by

any State on account of sex.
The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

The recent history of the ERA began in October 12, 1971 when this amendment was overwhelmingly approved by the U.S. House of Representatives in a 354 to 23 vote. It passed the Senate on March 22, 1972, again with an extremely strong vote of 84 to 8. To date the ERA has been ratified by 35 states and 38 are needed for the ERA to become the 27th amendment to the Constitution. Supporters of the ERA won a victory when Congress voted to extend the ratification deadline from March, 1979 to June, 1982.

Opponents of ERA led by Phyllis Schlafly and her right wing Stop ERA movement have developed a strategy of draining the financial resources of ERA supporters in costly legal and political battles while spreading spurious propaganda about what the ERA would mean for women. Anti-ERA forces are waging rescission campaigns in many states, including Wyoming, Indiana, North and South Dakotas, Montana and Delaware. In March, 1979 the South Dakota legislature voted to rescind approval of the ERA and joins Tennessee, Nebraska and Idaho for a total of four states which have rescinded ratification. Pro ERA groups point out that rescission is

a strategy of doubtful legality, though this legal battle will ultimately have to be fought, too.

Ellie Smeal (1979a) reports that the National Organization for Women (NOW) is being forced into the courts to defend its right to conduct an economic boycott of states which have not ratified the ERA. The Attorney General of Nevada and the Convention Bureau of Louisians have filed law suits. NOW won a recent case in which the Missouri Federal District Court decided that a boycott is a legitimate form of political expression. Quite possibly, however, this ruling may be appealed.

ERA supporters are also having to fight against advisory referenda which attempt to gain popular backing to instruct state legislatures to NOT ratify the ERA. According to Smeal (1979a), the purpose of these referenda is to drain the financial resources of pro ERA forces and have them appear to be against the public's voting on controversial issues. In fact, however, the referenda are "not instruments of the democratic process. They are devices which the right wing is using to force their opponents to spend millions and millions of dollars, and to turn attention from ratification. You'll be alarmed to know that last fall in Missouri more than $5 million was spent by both sides on the single

referendum involving that state's right to work law" (Smeal, 1979).

ERA opponents have resorted to moralistic and emotional propaganda, suggesting that the ERA will destory femininity and family life and will make, in some miraculous way, men and women all alike. They have employed scare tactics, arguing that the ERA would mean co-ed toilets, women forced into combat positions, homosexual marriages and federal usurpation of state authority (National Commission on the Observance of IWY, 1978:51).

On the other hand, an Equal Rights Amendment is needed. Many legal scholars argue that current legal safeguards are not enough to guarantee women equal rights and protection under the law. Neither the U.S. Constitution nor the 14th and 15th amendments grant to women full rights and protection. Under the 14th amendment race, but not sex has been interpreted as a "suspect" classification by the Supreme Court.

Because of institutional sexism women continue to be discriminated against in education and training, in employment, in access to credit and the goods and services which it buys, and even in such welfare state benefits as social security.

Opponents of the ERA seek to deny to women the same equality which the Declaration of Independence granted to men over 200 years ago. They do so on the basis of fatuous arguments which appeal to emotionalism and fears and which divide women against each other.

RIGHT WING LEADERSHIP IN THE ATTACK ON WOMEN

Anti-abortion and anti-ERA groups and key personalities are part of the extensive and interlocking network of right wing political forces. It is reasonable to argue that without the organizational effort and financial backing of the right wing, there would be no anti-abortion and anti-ERA movements of real substance. Both feminist and labor leaders have identified the right wing as the crucial element of the opposition.

Ellie Smeal (1979b), national president of NOW, in a recent letter to the membership, wrote:

> We must immediately respond to the right wing attack on women's reproductive freedom. The outrageous and unsuccessful attempts to restrict women's right to control their reproductive lives. The right wing would have us go backward to the days of danagerous, illegal back alley abortion....
>
> Please make an additional contribution in whatever amount you can afford to help NOW meet the right wing attack on issues this year.

In another letter Smeal (1979a) outlines the right wing

anti-ERA strategy:

> Make no mistake about it. The right wing is organizing, coordinating, and directing the attempt to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment....
>
> The opposition has put together a strategy designed to exhaust our financial resources, tax the energies of our activists in the field and to creat such havoc as to make it impossible to win ratification of the ERA in the 39 months we have just won. Here's how the opposition's strategy works. At a time when we are seeking to win ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in unratified states, the well-financed forces of the right wing have launched diversionary attacks on a variety of other fronts. These attacks are designed to prevent us from concentrating our efforts on seeking ratification.

For over a year NOW has run a column in the National NOW Times on the right wing entitled "Know the Opposition." This column educates and informs the NOW membership of the anti-feminist and other anti-democratic activities of right wing groups and politicians.

Labor leaders have also pinpointed the right wing's anti-feminist forces. George Meany, AFL-CIO president, in his 1978 Labor Day speech denounced the "hate merchants" who raise money through direct mail solicitation. In addition to their number one enemy - organized labor - Meany identified their other targets as ERA, gun control, abortion, busing the Panama Canal Treaty, and even flouride (The Register, 1978).

At the two day conference called by the AFL-CIO in August, 1978 to focus attention of the resurgence of the right and its threat to democratic institutions, other union leaders echoed Meany's views. According to William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists: "Like its spiritual predecessors in Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Franco's Spain, this army of the radical right has nothing but contempt for democracy and democratic institutions" (Washington Post, 1978:A2). He specifies a number of opponents of the radical right army in addition to labor-health and safety regulations at the workplace, equal rights for women and ethnic minorities, national health insurance, welfare progress and greater tax equity.

Others have made the connection between the right wing and anti-feminism. The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) of West Virginia states in its most recent brochure that women's right to choose abortion is under-attack "by a small, well-funded band known as the so-called 'right-to-life' groups" (NVNARAL, 1978). The right to life position is supported by the John Birch Society, the Klu Klux Klan, the National States Rights Party, and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, a separate lobbying

arm set up by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic Church has been recognized by all parties in the abortion controversy as the strongest institutional force in the anti-abortion crusade (Newsweek, 1978:39). It is reported that Catholics comprise about half of the membership of the national movement and support it with hundreds of thousands of dollars. The U.S. Catholic Conference, an official organ of the Church, freely issues "pro-life" propaganda (along with progaganda on a host of other right wing issues. The Bishops Conference, which receives at least 90% of its funds from the Catholic Church, has developed a "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities" (Perry, 1979). It is the Bishops Conference which has established the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment to push for a constitutional amendment against abortion. This committee receives roughly $300,000 annually from the various Catholic Diocese throughout the country (Newsweek, 1978;40). For example, West Virginia NARAL (1978) reports that the Diocese of Wheeling contributed $20.000 from January, 1976 to March, 1977.

Davida Perry (1979) of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights identified eight notables among right wing personalities active in the attack on women's rights.

Richard Viguerie, Paul Weyrich and Joseph Coors, all among the "who's who" of the right, are involved in the anti-abortion and anti-ERA efforts along with the myriad other right wing efforts. Viguerie is now famous for his computerized direct-mail fund raising and public relations organization which has greatly enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the groups and politicians in the right wing network. He, Weyrich and Coors established the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress for which Weyrich is now executive director. Coors, the patriarch of the Coor's Beer empire, also founded and funded Heritage Foundation, a "think-tank" of the far right and Weyrich served as its first president (Americans for Domocratic Action, 1978:8).

William Cox focuses his activity as a board member of the Bishops Conference and of the Committee for a Human Life Amendment. The group spearheading the push for a constitutional convention on abortion, Americans for a Constitutional Convention, has as its director Dan Buckley (no relation, but a former legislative aid to then Sen. James Buckley). Dan Buckley is also on the board of the Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life. Both James McFadden and Edward Capano serve on the governing boards of the Americans

for a Constitutional Convention and the Ad Hoc Committee in Defense fo Life (Perry, 1979).

We can't forget Phyllis Schlafly who has long been active in right wing politics. She has been affiliated with the John Birch Society, Young Americans for Freedom, was research director for the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation, and is now most visible as the head of Stop-ERA (Foster and Epstein, 1967). The kind of campaign mounted by Schlafly and her henchmen and women against the ERA is exemplified by the recent gala event thrown by Phyllis and company to celebrate the "death" of ERA. Schlafly had penned the lyrics for a number of songs sung by the Pantana Brothers (John and Phil, who teach at Liberty Baptist College) and their wives. One such song went like this:

> Here comes play-boy cot-ton-tal
> Hop-ping down the Cap-i-tol trail
> Try-ing to buy some votes for E-R-A
> Tell-ing ev-ery girl and boy
> you can on-ly have your joy
> By becoming u-ni-sex or gay. (Washington Post, 1979B:B2)

Schlafley (Washington Post, 1979B:B2) told the gathering: "We (Stop-ERA) are the most powerful positive force in America today because we have been able to give the bureaucrats in Washington a stunning defeat." She predicted that the women's movement would self-destruct because feminists were

not having babies. It's the Stop-ERA women, she contended, who are having children, caring for them, and raising well-adjusted people who would form the next generation. Finally, Schlafly (Washington Post, 1979b:B2) concluded: "I've always said, women would rather be loved than liberated."

This kind of analysis is typical of the self-righteous and moralistic line of the right wing which is patently false, but deceptively appealing to people who are frightened, unsure or looking for a quick-fix. Other right wing luminaries participating in the festivities included Sen. Jessie Helms (R-NC), Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Rep. Larry McDonald (D-GA), Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL), and Carolyn Gerster, president of the National Right to Life Committee (Washington Post, 1979b:B2).

Another guru of the right active in the anti-feminist cause is Howard Phillips, known to many as the hatchet-man selected by Nixon in 1973 to "illegally dismantle" the Office of Economic Opportunity (National NOW Times, 1978:6). Phillips is currently head of The Conservative Caucus, "the New Right tactical guerrilla force" which mobilizes the local electorate around single-issue causes. In recent years the Caucus has concentrated its energies in the anti-abortion and anti-ERA fight as well as in efforts

against gun control, busing, and gay rights (ADA, 1978:10). The Caucus states in one of its fund-raising appeals.

> "ERA would take away the basic rights and protection women have under the laws of God and the laws of the states" (in ADA, 1978:10).

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent by the Caucus in protecting these "alleged" rights. It has funded massive anti-ERA mailings sent out by Viguerie and has given technical assistance to Stop-ERA groups in states which have not ratified the ERA.

Stop-ERA is a family affair with the Phillipses. Howard's wife, Peggy, has worked as a volunteer in the Stop-ERA group near their home in Virginia (National NOW Times, 1978: 6).

While the Catholic Church is most involved in the anti-abortion cause, its contribution to the Stop-ERA forces should not be overlooked. The hand of the Church is clearly visible here too. The Washington Post (1979a:A7) reports the episode of a parish priest in South Dakota who swayed the vote of state Sen. Richard Flynn was then instrumental in the state's rescission of its 1973 ratification of the ERA. Flynn said: "I got a call from my parish priest whom I regard very highly.... He told me there is a direct correlation between abortion and the ERA, and I am diametrically opposed to abortion" (Washington Post, 1979a:A7). Sub-

sequently Flynn, who had earlier opposed rescission, now voted for rescission and was joined by another senator. South Dakota's legislature had thus voted to rescind the ERA 19 to 16.

As NOW notes, an important part of right wing strategy, in addition to the development of grass roots support and organization and fund raising, is political action. They point out that the political action committees (PACs) of the anti-abortion forces are dominated by right wing stars. Leadership in LIFE-PAC, which focuses on state legislative elections, includes Rep. Robert Bauman (R-MD), former NY Sen. James Buckley, Arizons state Rep. Donna Carlson and Howard Phillips. Director of LIFE-PAC is Lee Edwards, a former director of Young Americans for Freedom, and activist in the American Conservative Union and the National Right to Work Committee (National NOW Times, 1978:7).

National Pro-Life Pac concentrates on federal legislative races and features Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Rep. Harry Hyde (R-IL), author of the Hyde amendment, Rep. Larry McDonald (D-GA), a Bircher, and Rep. Robert Dornan (R-CA). Finally, we find Paul Weyrich heading up the Life Amendment PAC (National NOW Times, 1978:7).

CONCLUSION:

One fundamental question remains: "Why women?" With all the other targets and issues - Jews, communists, Blacks, ethnic minorities, tradeunions, busing, atheists, homosexuals, big government, progressives, etc. - why must the right wing attack women. There are two central reasons, one is economic the other is political.

The first is related to the conditions of economic crisis which are associated with the intensification of extreme right wing activity. During periods of deepening crisis unemployment rises. The corporate class wants to eliminate women as part of the surplus labor force to ease the unemployment problem. This class engages in and promotes attacks on the rights of women as a means of reducing women's full and equal participation as workers in the economic sector.

It should not surprise us, then, to find that most (12) of the (15) states which have not ratified the ERA also have right to work laws (Virginia, North and South Carolinas, Georiga, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Nevada, Utah and Arizona) (Canuso,1978:5-6). In one of the three remaining states, Missouri, right wing forces are busy with a campaign for right to work laws.

In these same, mostly southern, state the economic base is not sufficient to provide adequate education, health care and community services.

While women constitute 42 to 45% of the work force, the vast majority of women workers are in the service sector and nonunion industries. Even when women work, they are denied the protection afforded to their male counterparts. They are most often paid less for equal and equivalent work. Some employers threaten to strip women of basic human rights. A women recounts her experience when applying for work to the J.P. Stevens Company in North Carolina: "When I went to apply for the job they told me my family or my children could not come before my job" (in Canuso, 1978:4). The same forces of the right wing are waging war against the ERA, against women's right to control their bodies and destinies, and against the rights of women in their workplaces.

A second important reason for the assault on women's rights is the political dimension. If women are kept in the home, they remain politically backward. These women act as a brake on progressive political motion which is actually in the best interests of them, their husbands and families. Using religious and moralistic arguments against the right to choose abortion and the ERA is part of the

right wing strategy of having women see the world in fatalistic terms and strengthening the fervor of those who already do. Women are told that it is the "law of nature" and "God's will" for them to have babies, be "good" mothers and wives, and to preserve family life and morality.

Recent studies of ERA opponents in South Carolina indicate that their ideology does, in fact, closely resemble religious fundamentalism (Eastern Sociological Society Panel: 1979). Traditional sex roles - the women as wife, mother and homemaker and the man as breadwinner - are equated with nature. Denial of these roles is seen as a crime against nature and God and sure to bring on choas, destruction of the society and disorder.

The right wing presents itself and its position as having a monopoly on morality. Its phraseology of the issues reflects this clearly - anti-abortion is called "right-to-life;" anti-union activity becomes "right-to-work;" and anti-ERA groups are protecting the rights of women granted "under the laws of God and the laws of the states."

The fatalistic posture couched in religious and moral terms being pushed by the right wing is a reactionary and destructive force. It encourages women to see themselves as tools or pawns of God, nature and country. They are told

to accept things as they are, since it is inevitable forthem to be that way. Tradition is destiny and change is foolhardy and destructive. This perspective fosters inwomen the sense that they do not have control over their lives.

The right wing ideology reduces women as whole people. It would deny to women the right to act as creative forces in shaping their lives and in fulfilling their potential as human beings. The forces of the right have chosen to attack the rights of women to preserve and protect the class interests of the corporate elite. The rights of women to control their bodies and their destinies, to have a decent standard of living, to be treated equally in education, employment, wages and benefits are being sacrificed so that the corporate class can continue to extract its profits from the working class and to prosper.

The women's movement for equality - for the ERA and for the right to choose abortion - must be a movement against the right wing. Women must recognize the communality of their situation with that of workers, ethnic minorities and other oppressed groups and form with these groups a united front for equality against the anti-democratic forces of the right.

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